

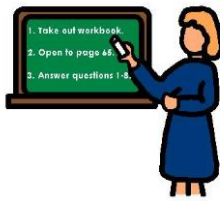
# What is Auditory Processing Disorder?

**Auditory Processing Disorder is a difficulty in processing the sound received by the ear.**

Once the ears have detected a sound is present, what the nerves and the brain do with that information is what we call auditory processing. Auditory processing is more than being able to hear. It's the abilities of the person AFTER the ear has picked up the sound.

Without it we can't perform ANY of our auditory functions. It is the basis for language, which in turn is the basis for reading. After all, reading is an auditory skill. Yes your eyes see the letters but those are then translated into sounds in the auditory and language parts of the brain to become sounds that fit together to make words.

**There are a variety of different symptoms that students with Auditory Processing disorder experience. The most common are:**



Trouble following verbal lessons



Difficulty remembering a sequence of instructions



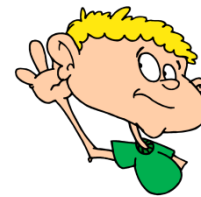
Dislikes noise



Poor concentration & achievement at school

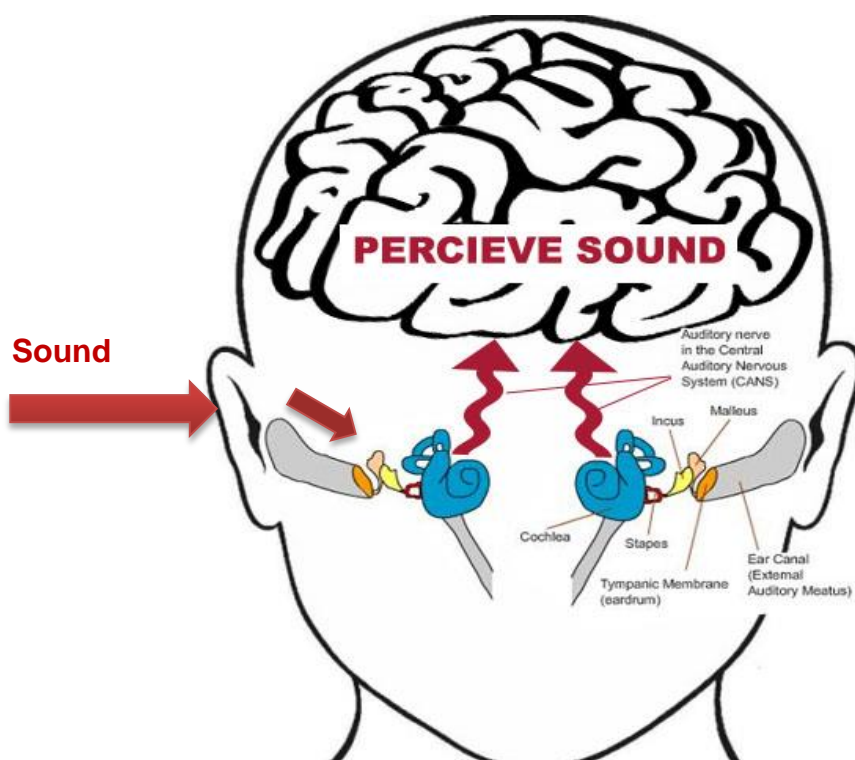


Difficulty hearing the difference in speech sounds



Trouble ignoring background noise

## What happens?



Auditory processing is a building block for language, and although the involvement is complex, we see significant relationships with auditory processing and phonemic awareness (Smart, 2012, Journal of Educational Audiology), and we know that it affects reading abilities as well as having major impacts on classroom learning (Johnston, 2009 - Journal of International Audiology). Auditory Processing should therefore be measured on every child with a language, reading, or classroom learning difficulty.

## Is there a way to improve Auditory Processing?

The auditory system is plastic, meaning it can change. There are several published journal articles on ways to improve auditory processing areas with directed and adaptive auditory training.

There are apps and programs that are targeted at the most common areas and the areas that are the strongest correlates to reading and language delays. (Talk to your specialist audiologist).

The Hear Builder program strengthens a student's abilities in:

- ❖ Auditory memory
- ❖ Following instructions
- ❖ Phonological processing
- ❖ Sequencing



## What can be done in the classroom to help those with APD?

Unfortunately, with different areas of the auditory system that are underdeveloped, the problems are different. For example, with certain types of APD, we don't recommend having the child look at a visual aid while listening to a verbally presented lesson, yet with other types this would be very helpful. For all types of children with APD, there are some helpful strategies:

- **Identify those that have APD issues** using audiologist designed screening software
- **Avoiding excess noise in the classroom**
- **Placing the child in a less distractible position** where they typically have a better chance of hearing you.
- **Work with the family** - Having parents pre-teach information such as the spelling word list or read to them the next day's reading exercise.
- **Often a buddy system** where a model student and the child with APD do certain activities together, particularly when shifting from one lesson to another where instructions are given to move locations or get preparation materials.
- **FM systems** can be fitted to help target sound, and lift the teacher's voice above the background noise



## Do you need more information or support?

The Empowered Learning Trust is working with the Auditory Processing Network in Taupo to help support children and families affected by Auditory Processing Disorder. We can screen a child to see if they are struggling with a difficulty in auditory processing, and refer them on to a qualified audiologist. Please contact Empowered Learning Trust if you would like to know more about APD, or have a child you would like screened:

email: [empoweredlearning@xtra.co.nz](mailto:empoweredlearning@xtra.co.nz)